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ANUBHAVA MANTAPA

THE HEART OF THE LINGAYAT RELIGION

By
Late Rev. **C.D. UTTANGI**

Ed. By
Dr. S.R. GUNJAL

Akhila Bharatha Sharana Sahithya Parishat, Mysore
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"ANUBHAVA MANTAPA: The Heart of the Lingayat Religion" - By Rev. C.D. Uttangi, Edited by Dr. S.R. Gunjal and Published by Akhila Bharatha Sharana Sahithya Parishat, Mysore

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Akhila Bharatha Sharana Sahitya Parishat expresses its happiness as also gratitude on the occasion of publishing this short but significant Note on Anubhava Mantapa contributed by a towering personality in the Kannada literature, Rev. Uttangi Channappa, in the early years of the 20th century. Uttangi was a confluence of the essences of both Christianity and Veerashaivism; streams of traditional values and modern thoughts. He was the one who immortalised himself in Kannada literature by identifying the greatest poet-saint Sarvajna.

The Parishath is happy to bring out the fifth edition of this writing of Rev. Channappa Uttangi and make it available to the ardent researchers and readers as the copies were not available for quite some years. The Parishath expresses its gratitude to Dr. S.R. Gunjal who has been kind enough to allow the Parishat to republish it.

In order to facilitate the researchers and the readers we have added the list of writings of and on Rev. Channappa Uttangi which again is provided by Dr. Gunjal.

I, as the president of the Parishat, would appeal to the serious researchers to undertake the work on the advanced studies in Lingayatism/Veerashaivism on the lines designed by Rev. Uttangi (please see the synopsis given at the end). The Parishat would be ready to publish such a work if and when it is done.

It is hoped that this publication would be received by the public with love and interest.

Bangalore
15.8.1998

Go.Ru. Channabasappa
President
Akhila Bharatha Sharana
Sahitya Parishat

REV. C. D. UTTANGI
(A CENTENARY APPRECIATION)

"Same water to drink, same earth to walk,
Same fire to burn : why, then, this talk.
Of higher and lower stock ? Sarvajna."

Once in the month of June, 1949, a Sanskrit Pandit of Bangalore who was also a reputed novelist in Kannada requested his Guru to enlighten him as to how he should receive a learned but non-Brahmin friend of his from Dharwad, whom he would like to invite home when he would next go over to Bangalore and honour him, as he recently presided over the Annual Session of Kannada Literary Conference, a unique honour accorded to an eminent litterateur for the memorable service rendered by him to Kannada land and literature. The Guru advised him to receive his guest friend with the same honours

as he would his own Guru, for, learning and scholarship knows no differences of caste, creed or sex. The guest friend arrived as per invitation accorded well in advance by a letter-post, and the host was waiting with his wife at the entrance with a pot of water in his hand, and his wife holding a saucer of lights (*arati*) with turmeric powder, sandal paste, vermilion and other ingredients of worship. The guest, even as he was made to stand on a plank, asked out of humility and abashed with amaze "What is all this, friend!" "You're our guest now, don't you know, '*Athiti devo bhava*' " returned the host. The host washed the guest's feet and applied turmeric, sandal paste and other ingredients and his wife waived the saucer of lights. Thus the guest was received in. The guest friend was Rev. Uttangi, the host Pandit was Devudu Narasimhashastry. What a catholicity of religious outlook, breadth of vision and largeness of heart! Rare indeed in the caste-ridden and corrupt society of our day when even the very air we breathe is polluted. All the four, therefore, Rev. Uttangi, Pandit Devudu, his wife and Guru deserve our highest praise and honour. They were the real votaries of Saraswati and true ambassadors of genuine culture.

Pandit Devudu had great regard for Rev. Uttangi and highest admiration for the research work he rendered in the early twenties of our century. Rev. Uttangi was one of the very few doyens who rendered a pioneering and enduring service in the cause of Kannada literature at a time when even the classics were locked up in palm-leaf manuscripts about to be almost permanently lost to white ants or unknowingly and inadvertently confined to flames as rubbish.

Rev. Uttangi belonged to a Lingayat family of Uttangi, a village in Huvinahadagali taluka of Bellary district, converted to Christianity. The conversion reads like a romantic but very touching story.

His forebears were the Patels of the village but more popularly renowned as Parupatyagars, which honorific name was conferred on them by Vijayanagar Kings for their supply of provisions to the Vijayanagar army. Chennappagouda after whom Rev. Uttangi was named was his grandfather. He was rather curious by nature and ideal by temperament. He had only two daughters, by the first wife and no issue by the second, even though he married her to have a male issue to continue his progeny. The second wife, out of the disappointing anguish caused thereby, committed suicide by jumping to the ground from the top of Basaveshvar temple on a hill in front of the village. As a result of such an excruciatingly agonising tragedy he renounced his family and home and went far off to a remote village and joined the local Patel as his bonded servant to clean his stables and feed his bullocks and buffaloes. But he was soon recognised as a man of status and sent back home. Yet he was not relieved of the shock and pain. So he began to lose interest in his original religion. When his heart was burning under such a crisis a Christian missionary came to him as though a god sent and gave a copy of The New Testament, which he began reading stealthily so as to avoid the notice of his family members as well as other co-religionists. When his wife found it he disclosed her his decision to become a Christian asking her to follow him if she would which she reported to her mother. She advised her to follow her husband.

Thus the couple left home and went via Mundargi and Malasamudra to Dharwad to embrace Christianity where the present Basel Mission was very recently established. After testing him and his Bhakti for Christ, the Missionary authorities took him into the Christian fold. Subsequently he got male issues and was glad. Before he breathed his last he blessed his younger son, a babe of six-months, saying 'renouncing every comfort and well-being did I come to Jesus' feet, may He bless you to be grown-up.' That son is our Reverend's father, Sri Daniel Uttangi.

Shri Daniel, after passing the 2nd year Training Course Examination, became a Primary School teacher. He was the first trained teacher in the Basel Mission. After serving for a year or two in Primary Schools at Dharwad and Guledgudda he served for thirty years as the Superintendent of the Orphan's School at Betgeri. The next ten years he worked in the Mission Town School. While in service he suddenly died of heartfail.

Our Reverend then completed his book entitled '*Hindu Samajada Hitachintaka*' (Well-Wisher of Hindu Society) dedicated the same to his father. The dedication reads as follows : "The book is dedicated with filial affection at the feet of his father Denielappa Parupatyagar who, after serving the Mission with loyalty and sincerity to the last breath of his life for 43 years including his 20 year's service as Primary School teacher and without taking the service of anybody suddenly died on April 9, 1920 by the side of his eldest son". Severely bereaved of his death and owing to paralytic stroke his wife followed him on February 13, 1923, leaving behind four sons and one daughter out of ten children born of them.

Mr. Daniel had no issue for four years after his wedding. His elder brother who lived for more than ninety years too had no issue at all. Lest their progeny should discontinue, the couple took an oath that, should the God bless them with a son, they would surrender him to His service. As if in response to their pledge and prayer, our Rev. Uttangi, was born on 28th October, 1881, and named, as mentioned before, after his grandfather; hence his name Chennappa. When he reached his school going age his father was the Superintendent of Mission School for Orphans at Betigeri. So he completed his Primary education there itself. Even forty years after the Mission High School was opened, there was no proper provision for Christian students while non-Christians have availed themselves of the facility. Eminent missionaries, especially R.K. Earnest fought for the removal of this anomaly and succeeded. Rev. Uttangi, was one among the twelve students first admitted. Hence Rev. Uttangi cherished high regard for Earnest, and in token of which he dedicated his short sermon, '*Bethlehaim's appeal to Benares*'

Rev. Uttangi never cheated his conscience, nor accepted what he was not convinced of. While still a student, he protested against his teacher on geometrical definitions that a point has position but no magnitude, and that a straight-line has length but no width, and, unconvinced by the teacher, boycotted the study of Geometry, a science, in his view, built on false foundations. Even so in the Matriculation Examination he did not answer Geometry paper and failed. Henceforth he never appeared for any examination, but busied himself in his usual self study, noticing which his father,

true to his oath of dedicating his eldest son to the service of God, sent him to the Theological Seminary of Mangalore which was the Principal Centre of Basel Mission.

Rev. Uttangi then a budding youth of twenty, though the Seminary served as a gymnasium for his instinctive scientific bent of mind, found the situation and atmosphere prevailing there uncongenial to his rational thinking. He had to read, it is said, rational thinkers like Herbert Spencer stealthily. Though the authorities were reluctant to entertain him any more, his unswerving interest in the acquisition of knowledge and studious habits and excellent behaviour in all other respects compelled them to retain him up to the end. So Rev. Uttangi got there food for body only but not the knowledge he hungered for. Therefore he attended the lecturers of his choice and absented himself for the rest. At the stage he, intending to shift to the College of Bishops at Calcutta, requested the Bishop of Bombay to help him in this direction. The Bishop, too, promised all assistance. But his revered Guru prevailed on him not to leave the Basel Mission, his Alma Mater.

He Served in the Basel Mission altogether for 33 years in various capacities-parish preacher, Bible teacher in High School, Superintendent of Orphans' School and in several places such as Haveri, Betageri, Dharwad and Hubli, and retired after meritorious service on 1st January, 1942.

His method of preaching, unlike the traditional method of locating and pointing out flaws and loopholes

in other religions and harping upon day in and day out and in all places, was that of placing in juxtaposition the best in every religion and giving a requisite exposition to the comparative excellence in Jesus and his gospel of love and compassion, fraternity and fellow feeling. To his co-religionists asking why he admires Bassava and Vachana literature, he answered that Basava is the best Christian and to the Lingayats asking why he should not return to Lingayatism a religion of his forebears which he admires and writes about, he answered that Jesus is the best Lingayat, a notable example at this context. So he never criticised or castigated any other religion nor spoke ill of anybody. His name Rev. Uttangi in Kannada conveys a suggestion of loftiness. Throughout his long and fruitful life of 82 years never did he stoop too low nor step down from his lofty ideal and unblemished height of character. The controversy over the historicity of Anubhava Mantapa and Siddarama's Lingadharana (investiture of Linga) ran long between him, one on side, and Kapataral Krishnarao and Dr. D.L. Narsimhachar, noted names for research and scholarship in Kannada, on the other. It was a discussion at a very high academic level and scholarship. The way each side argued his thesis and counterargued his antithesis was so admirable that any student of literature must be proud of Rev. Uttangi's depth of scholarship and his exquisite skill in meeting arguments counter to his, the magnanimous way of presenting them were a witness to his nobility, poise and dignity of behaviour and academic honesty.

Not only did he preach to the educated Christians and non-christians but also identify himself with the poor and the lowly, the down-trodden and the humiliated untouchables in the society by sharing their joys and griefs alike. Kanavalli, a village near Haveri, would never forget him especially the Harijans.

German Missionaries of the Besel Mission like Rev. Kittel, Rev. Wirth, Rev. Mongling and Rev. Zigler who came to India, or more particularly to Karnataka in the latter half of the 19th Century, were not only eminent savants of learning having top degrees of renowned universities but dedicated promoters of education as well. So they, along with their legitimate duties of the Mission, rendered greatest service to the local language and literature of the region they served. Some of them were eminent indologists and are till to date esteemed as authorities on Upanishads and other religious scriptures. Rev. Kittel's Kannada-English dictionary is a monumental example in this regard. But very rarely on the other hand did the native missionaries contribute such a laudable literary service. Our Rev. Uttangi is a noted exception who carried on the tradition of German service to Kannada language and literature, thereby ranking himself as one of the most research scholars of the early twenties and thirties, others being R.B. Narasimhachariyar R.B.P.G. Halakatti and the like of that generation, whom every conscientious student of Kannada literature must remember gratefully for his immense indebtedness to them. His Bethleham's appeal to Benares (*Benarasakke Bethlehamina Vinanti*) his first work was published in 1921. It is a sermon of very high order. It is an evidence to show his way of straight

forward and precise presentation, command over expression corresponding to the development of thought content.

In the same year his another work *Well-Wisher of Hindu Society* (*Hindu Samajada Hitachintaka*) was published at Mangalore. It ably exposes how the age-old fourfold class system, degenerating itself into tens of thousands of castes and compartmentalized barriers has brought about the total ruin and downfall of the country and led to its abject slavery for centuries. A staunch patriot, that he was, he being sorely touched by the dreadful and deplorable situation of the country, wrote it justifying his thesis and counterthesis on scriptural as well as inscriptional evidences.

The monumental work which made him famous and his name permanently rest in the history of Kannada literature of our time is the locating, collecting, collating and editing triplets of Sarvajna one of our secular and popular poets. How his casual interest and initial curiosity slowly developed into regular mania and how the work accidently fell on him, while he was teaching Kannada language to European Missionaries is a rare instance to bear out the truth that inscrutable are the ways of divine dispensation.

While quoting simple examples for his purpose he used to translate daily one or two triplets of Sarvajna. The more he gave them to the foreigners the more they asked for. As a result he started collecting them then in vogue on people's tongue, slowly palm-leaf manu-scripts. Thus he was physically and mentally caught and

captivated by them. The first edited collection was printed in 1924, in the Karnatak Printing Press; the tenacity and magnanimity shown by the Proprietor the late Shri Yashvantarao Jathar in this regard is a matter of pride indeed. Because in those days books published were rarely sold and the Printer and Publisher must have an atlantean patience. Its revised second edition came out in 1927, popular and pocket editions in 1935. The cheap edition printed in 1941 was perhaps the last. It is easier to write new books than editing of old books in manuscripts.

Rev. Uttangi had to work very patiently and with dedication for nearly 8-10 years. During the course of this strenuous work the trails and tribulations he encountered were many. Acute poverty, heavy burden of running a large family, opposition from natives and foreigners to this work, death of parents, suffering for months from bodily ailment by paralytic stroke, loss of children in between, above all Mrs. Uttangi's bed-ridden condition for eighteen years and attendance upon her like nurse-such were the fires he was made to go through before he accomplished the high goal of his life's endeavour.

In order to sort out the triplets and arrange them according to their theme, it is reliably learnt and was evident from the way he lectured on several occasions and in several conferences quoting them incessantly from memory without the help of the book or a piece of note. Rev. Uttangi read the triplets over and over again, veritably thousands of times. That is indeed a greater editorial service than one would think, for

Sarvajna's range of interest and of subject matter is enormous and varied.

A long and most scholarly introduction he wrote for the library edition was a model to all literary critics in those days when there was a dearth thereof. It very well exemplifies the truth of the doctrine that self-detachment is the first requisite of a good critic. For all this service of sincerity and dedication he was honoured, though a little belatedly, by electing him uncontested the President of 32nd Karnatak Literary Conference held at Kalburgi. His presidential address was headed by an humble but characteristic tittle "A beggar of genuine Kannada" in which he humbly observes "Whether *I* made Sarvajna famous or *he* made me famous I know not". What humility ! Thus by his living and writings he enriched and ennobled kannada land and people. His Centenary birth-day comes during this October.

May we pay our humblest and heartfelt regards to this great man who, by his academic honesty, patient research and scholarship, and magnanimous heart and spirit of service, had as much endeared himself to Jesus Christ as he had done to the people of Kannada land and language.

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Dharwad
30th June 1981

112259

ANUBHAVA MANTAPA

THE HEART OF THE LINGAYAT RELIGION

1. Its historicity

From the inscriptions available in Karnataka and elsewhere, it is fairly established that Basava, the reformer, in the real sense, the founder of Lingayat religion, lived at about 1160 A.D. It is known from these as well as the early literary sources that he was the Prime Minister or the Financial Secretary of a Shaiva King named Bijjala (1157-1167 A.D.) who usurped the Chalukyan throne and ruled in Kalyana, a city of historic importance, about 60 miles from Gulbarga, in the Karnataka State. One of the main works Basava did was the formation of an Institution that went by the name of *Anubhavamantapa* or "The Institution of Religious Experience." That this rare but monumental institution in

the religious history of India was founded by him is corroborated by the sayings of Sharanas-technically known as "*Vachana Sastra*" as well as of the earliest records of his life written about thirty years after his death. The former sources, the Vachanas being composed by eye witnesses may be relied upon as authentic. Hence there is no doubt as to the historicity of "*Anubhavamantapa*" being founded by Basava.

2. The causes that brought the Mantapa into existence, its religious significance, and its apostles

The main intention of the great reformer in raising an institution of this type was to give a new life to the dying religion. It may be said that he gave heart to it rather than intellect. Buddhism, Brahmanism and Jainism, which had cultivated especially the intellectual and the moral side of Indian Society had deplorably degenerated in his days and were unable to help humanity in its dying moments. To remedy this he sought for the living element in religion, which led him to construct the same (religion) on the basis of experience and which eventually resulted in the formation of *Anubhavamantapa.* In other words, it may be said that he struggled to rescue religion from the heavy mechanism of rituals on the one hand, and impractical idealism on the other, which taught much but did very little in helping the people to bring those high ideals into practice. However, the living religion of Basava found its day, and the so called scriptures were replaced by men of religious experience and character. In short, it may be said that he constructed religion entirely on an

experimental and pragmatic basis. This may be corroborated by one of the sayings of his contemporaries, which runs thus: 'Knowledge is action; action is knowledge'. To differentiate them is to end in theory, since one *knows* more exactly by *doing* alone. To know that one should not covet his neighbour's wife is knowledge, true; to translate that into action is knowledge complete; but to know it and to act otherwise, behold! the same is ignorance (*Ajnana*) *Oh! Lord Kudala Channa Sangamadeva.*

The religion thus built, less on reason and more on a pragmatic basis had its deep foundation in action which very soon became the acid test of conduct of all the members of the Mantapa in their every day life.

Anubhavamantapa or the Institution of Religious Experience which came into existence by the great reformer was a nucleus, around which gathered men of religious experience who were known as Veerasaiva saints. The first and the foremost among those who helped the institution in general and *Basava* in particular were perhaps Madara Channayya* and Dohara Kakkayya, who had come from the lowest class and who were his senior contemporaries. They were endowed with high spiritual qualities and the great reformer was pleased to call the one, his spiritual father and the other, his great grandfather. The burning zeal of Basava for putting religion on a democratic basis, his passionate love for

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* There is a difference of opinion among the scholars as to his contemporary life with Basava. I agree with M.R. Shirnivasamurti, who holds that he was Basava's contemporary. See "The life of Basava" In Kannada, Appendix No. 2

God, his untiring energy in serving humanity which made him consider himself lower than the lowest among the devotees of *Siva*, his guileless heart, his readiness for open confession, his exemplary life of selfsacrifice, added to the glory of the Mantap. The whole edifice rested chiefly on the three great personalities, Basava, Channabasava and Prabhudeva who may be compared to the three apostles or pillars of the early Christian church.

In a short time the fame of the institution spread all over India and men and women of various faiths joined his flag. We learn from the early Lingayat works that the devotees of Siva flocked in from countries like Pandya, Chola, Chera, Gurjarat, Orissa, Bengal, Kashmir and Nepal. The King of Kashmir attracted by this new revival is said to have abandoned his kingdom and become a member of this academy and led the life of poverty in his later days and supported his family by selling fuel. This remote member, once the ruler of Kashmir, was known during his stay at Kalyana as Molige Marayya "The faggort seller" and the queen who had followed him passed by the name of Mahadevi "The Great Mother". In this *Anubhava mantapa,* the flower garden of spiritual experience, the royal pair represented the specimens of the violet plant, the flowers of which are known for their hidden appearance and sweet smell. Likewise these two members made the Mantapa attractive not by their outward appearance and royal habits, or by the meritorious renunciation they had already achieved, but by the fragrance of their inner life and simplicity. The Queen, whose short biography in the Virasaiva literature stands as a model for feminine

boldness and moral courage, mingled with all gentleness and modesty, was his constant friend, adviser and guide. With this rare combination of opposite virtues, she very often shines as a critic of her master in whom she had the keenness to detect the spiritual pride of which he was quite unaware and which at times was the real cause of keeping him away from the goal he was ever struggling to reach.

Not unlike the king from the north, there came from the south, a ruler named Sakalesa Madarasa, who not only had renounced his kingdom but also adopted the life of an ascetic to help Basava in his movement as instructed by his father. Likewise we hear of Adayya, a wealthy merchant from Gujarath, Marulasankaradeva from Kalinga (Orissa), Maiduna Ramayya from Andhra, Ekanta Ramayya from Kuntala, an extreme devotee of Siva, who is said to have been miraculously restored to life which he had voluntarily offered in his zeal for the new faith, as evidenced by the Abalur inscription. A batch of ladies consisting of Mahadeviyakka, Satyakka, Muktayakka under the leadership of Ajaganna is said to have marched from the surroundings of Ballegavi, a city of historic importance in the Mysore State. From Banavasi (Karwar) came Prabhudeva who was elected the president of the assembly. From Hipparige (Bijapur) came Madivala Machayya and Siddarama from Sonnalapura, modern Sholapur.

There came men not only from high circles but also from various professions. So we meet with Jedara Dasimayya a weaver, Sankara Dasimayya a tailor, Madivala Machayya a washerman, Medara Ketayya a

basket maker, Ambigara Chaudayya a ferryman, Hadapada Appanna a barber, Dakkeya Bommanna a drummer, Turugahi Ramanna a cowherd, Sunkada Bankanna a tax gatherer, Kinnari Bommanna a goldsmith, Okkalu Muddayya a farmer, Jodhara Madanna a soldier, Dohara Kakkayya a tanner, Madara Channayya a cobbler, Talvara Kamideva a petty officer under the village headman, Ganada Kannappa a oil miller, Vaidya Sanganna, a physician, Kirata Sangayya a hunter, Nuliya Chandayya a grass rope maker, Suji Kayakada Ramitande a linen draper, Malahara Kayakada Chikkadevaya a dealer in and repairer of second hand articles, Bachi-kayakada Basavappa, a carpenter, Sattige Kayakada Ramitande, an umbrella holder, Kannadiya Kayakada Ammidevayya, a mirror manufacturer, Kadira Kayakada Remmavve a spinner (woman), Kottanada Remmavve a rice pounder (woman), Aydakkiya Marayya who lives by gleaning rice grains dropped in the field, while gathering crops.

An assembly of this nature, very often an ideal of many modern social and political reformer, stands unparallelled in the religious history of India, since it adopted as its creed interdining, intermarriage and spiritual intercourse, irrespective of caste, colour, creed, sex, age, rank, position and profession among its followers.

To hold the meetings of this assembly, a part of Basava's palace - an open hall - was set apart and it got the name of Mahamane or *Anubhava mantapa* later. In this Church of Religious Experience, every member considered his brethern greater than himself. For the

residence of these members, caves cut in hillocks were constructed within the radius of a few miles from the Mantappa and the ruins of which are still found within the precincts of *Kalyana.*

These saints of the first magnitude, that were shining in the firmament of Virasavisim in the 12th century may be approximately counted up to 300.

At the meetings of this assembly were discussed the theoretical and the practical sides of Virasaivism. The points and the nature of these debates may be found in a work called 'Shunya Sampadane', a compilation of the 16th century. These discussions remind us of the "Dialogues of Plato" the Greek philosopher. To illustrate the various stages of spiritual life in mystic experience a staircase or a throne of six steps was erected by the great reformer, each step being represented by a person or persons recognised by the assembly to have attained that stage in spiritual life. The persons, who gave a living presentation of a particular stage were appointed masters of that stage in spiritual attainment, and every bit of spiritual advancement was regarded as a means to the progress of spiritual life. Thus Basava was known for devotion, Channa Basava for knowledge, Madivalayya for purity of heart, Siddharama for ecstasy, Ajaganna for spiritual union, etc. Of these dignitaries Prabhudeva, who was regarded by his colleagues to have attained the last stage of spiritual experience, technically called 'Aikya Sthala' or 'Linganga Samarasya' the unity of the individual soul with the universal spirit, held the highest rank. The seat or the throne from which he spoke was called "Shunya Simhasana."

3. Its Work

(1) It revolutionised the idea and the method of worshipping God in idolatrous India by introducing a method of its own which was perhaps not in vogue many centuries before the institution came into existence. If Agamic religion had improved upon the sacrificial religion of the Vedas, by substituting image worship in the temples, etc., this institution superseded both by its particular "Ista Linga" worship and proclaimed its first commandment under the polytheistic sky that God is one and He should be worshipped in one and one form alone, viz., the formless one. By bringing into practice this new mode of worship which was rather a physical representation of the Absolute of the Upanishads, it made a remarkable change in the image worship of India which is supposed to be one of the essential elements of popular Hinduism, so deeply ingrained in the Indian mind.

(2) By the introduction of the ceremony of "Linga Diksa" it threw open the doors of the new faith to men and women of all castes and creeds and put its followers high and low on equal status and infused brotherly feelings into the new community which resulted in creating brotherhoods and sisterhoods. In short, it built the new society on democratic basis in which every individual had the right to enjoy full liberty in social and religious matters. The "Ista Linga" is called by some one a "Universal Leveller".

(3) By means of *Satsthala* philosophy it weakened the theory of transmigration and destroyed the roots of rebirth. Although there is a way in Hinduism for

emancipation through *Jnana Marga,* it is extremely difficult to secure as it is meant only for the select few. For an ordinary family man there is no certainty as to when he will attain to this final goal though he seeks for it in earnest and does all that the scriptures demand from him. But this institution removed the uncertainty by ensuring the attainment of the final goal in this very life to every individual who accepted its faith. In Vedic Literature we find no such hopeful promises being made except to the *Sanyasis.*

(4) It regarded the gentle sex as in no way inferior to men in spiritual matters. Consequently the contributions in religious experience from the gentle sex were not only heartily welcomed but also more highly appreciated than that of men. This exceptional attitude of the institution towards the gentle sex changed, so to say, the destiny of Indian women as opposed to Jainism and Brahmanism in which the one denied the right of salvation and the other the right of studying scriptures except Puranas, to the fair sex. It produced personalities like Mahadeviyakka, Satyakka and Muktayakka, women of sterling character and remarkable independence of thought and action and was also the cause of a valuable production of Vachanas by many authoresses whose religious experience some times far surpassed that of men.

Such representative women or sisters were afterwards called "The gentle-sex-saints of Virasaivism" and they may be numbered about 30.

(5) It became the power-house or the dynamo to Lingayatism which kindled many a cold soul and brought

a miraculous change in the lives of the most sinful men and women.

(6) It searched for the crystalline purity of heaven and the more deeply the members of the Mantapa examined their inner-life the more defective it was found and the certainty of attaining perfection in the present life seemed almost impossible and something against human experience. The saint who took delight in conversing about the progress of his spiritual life and was conscious of its growth was considered as an unworthy child of God, as they soon arrived at the conclusion that the law of unconscious growth in the physical world should hold good also in the life of the spiritual world. Consequently the Sidhas and Buddhas who professed to have attained perfection there and now were set aside and no longer admired. In all controversial points concerning mystic experience, action and not reason, was its final criterion.

(7) It gave full liberty of thought and action and a free scope for discussion in religious matters. As a result of this every man and woman brought his or her share of experience and laid it at the foot of "*Shunya Sinhasana*" which Prabhudeva, the prince of the saints adorned at times by his presence. The share of experience thus brought forth by any member in great humility was called his "Sampadane" hence the word "*Shunya Sampadane*".

(8) It enriched the Kannada language and literature by the new style of expressing its independent thought and experience. It breathed life into the dead bones of

the spoken Kannada which was looked down upon by the classical writers of the pre-Basava period.

(9) It taught the dignity and love of labour by giving it a religious significance. Every kind of manual work that was considered degrading by the so-called high caste persons was looked upon as blessed and holy, as it was done in the spirit of service both to God and man. Thus it laid a new foundation in the history of the economics of the land.

(10) It liberated the new community from the evils of superstition and irrational fears of religious pollution to which the sister communities in India were subjected and which stand even to day as the veritable impediments to the progress of any reforming cult.

(11) It was a small museum in which one could find beautiful specimens of religious experience, which modern psychology has classified into various types of mysticism.

(12) It was also a cleansing fountain in which every member washed himself clean of the slightest tinge of egotism very often detected and pointed out by his brethren, instances of which are scattered over the pages of "*Shunya Sampadane*."

(13) It ended the struggle for supremacy between *Jnana, Bhakti* and *Karma,* by giving them equal importance which according to Lingayat tenets are physically represented by *Guru, Linga* and *Jangama*. The

Bhagavad-Gita which typically represents the same sympathetic view may be said to be wanting in *Virasaiva* interpretation.

(14) It laid stress upon family life which in its opinion was in no way a disqualification to salvation as opposed to Buddhism & Jainism which closed their doors of salvation against the householder unless he abandoned his family and became a sanyasi or member of the Sangha. *Virasaiva* saints of the 12th century are the living examples of the above mentioned principle and even the great reformer who is believed to be the incarnation of the sacred bull of Siva was not an exception to this.

Thus the majority of the apprentices that joined the Mantapa or Spiritual Academy were family men and the names of the successful candidates who obtained salvation in this very life are published in a booklet called Ganasahasra and they are popularly known as 770 Amaraganas meaning hosts of immortals.

(15) It experimented on a small scale and solved the problem of uplifting and educating the untouchables who stand even today outside the pale of Hinduism, destitute of the sense of human rights. Virasaivism of the day gave them education in the true sense of the term enabling them to express their feelings and thoughts in their mother tongue. In consequence we find every one of them an author of Vachanas in which he skilfully allegorizes his profession illustrating the spiritual truths he has found.

(16) Last but not least was the method of "standing on wooden sandals with *Pointed-Nails"* practised by a class of men appointed for the purpose of church-discipline whose duty or profession was called "Mullavigeya Kayaka" by which the innocent had to suffer for the delinquent in calling him to repentance a method which seems to be absent in the disciplinary means of any civilised society either in the East or West and which is said to have been adopted by the great reformer, who is often called the Luther of Karnatak, or the Buddha of the South. It anticipates the self-imposed spirit of suffering which has been widely infused into the mind of the public by Mahatmaji.

This institution reminds one, of the early councils of Asoka, or the Sangam of the Tamilians, or the parliament of religions of Janaka of the Upanishadic days, or the later parliament of religions of Akbar. But unlike these it inverted the order a procedure of the theory and practice of religion. In short this movement may be said to be somewhat unique in the religious history of India.

It might seem to the reader that *Virasaivism* had certain features in common with *Vira Vaisnavism* and other *Agamic* schools. But the credit of bringing into practice the above mentioned principles goes to the *Virasaivas* rather than *Vira Vaisnavas.*

4. "Shunya Sampadane"

The origin of the expression *Shunya Sampadane* is given in para No. 7. There are other explanations also

worth considering. At the first sight, the word "*Shunya*" seems to have been borrowed from Buddhistic literature which advocates an idea more or less of negative or nihilistic nature, often illustrated by the extinction of fire. But in Lingayat literature it has a different connotation which differs from the *Dwaita* conception, in which the individual soul though eternal as the universal soul is never expected to become perfect as the latter. The *Advaita* conception is rejected as well for the reason that it denies the reality of the individual soul and material world and holds the identity of the individual and the cosmic soul. But in *Saktivisistadvaita* philosophy of Lingayatism, it is held that the material world and the individual soul have a reality in God and these could not be distinguished, in the *Avyakta* or unmanifested state called *Niskala* in Lingayat literature. This mysterious union is very often illustrated either by the magnet and its power or matter and energy or the sun and its rays. It has all the negative aspects that can be had from the Buddhistic or the Vedantic conception and the positive aspects that can be found in mysticism. Practically *Shunya Sampadane* is somewhat akin to St. Paul's interpretation of his spiritual experience which is worded as follows:- "*It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth me*". To use here the *Virasaiva* terminology again, it is the transformation of *Anganga* into *Linganga*, which modern psychology is pleased to call 'Sublimation'. To speak in the language of Biblical theology it is a state in which is one's own has found its grave and to reach which the regenerate man struggles his utmost by submitting himself to the Divine Will. In other words it is a kind of complete self-abnegation or reducing the "*Flesh*" or the "*Lower Self*" to zero point. In terms of

Mystic psychology, it is the merging of the individual consciousness into universal consciousness which cannot be expressed in terms of any school of philosophy.*

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* For the detailed study on the historicity of Anubhava Mantapa see the book in Kannada by the same author.

* My equating St. Paul's Experience with Shunya Sampadane

(1) If the protestant theologians of dogmatic tendency fundamentally refuse to accept mystic phenomena as worthy of scientific investigation and treatment I cannot but agree to differ for want of common ground. I believe your Bern and Jurich theologians have gone through 'The Varieties of Religious Experiences' by William.

James, the first American Psychologist who (though not a believer in mysticism) declared that so called mystic experience is worthy of objective science. Since then the attitude of many a theologian has been changed

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* This is a reply to the theological professors of Bern and Zurich Universities sent through Rev. J.J. Urner for the contension raised by them against my equating St Paul's experience with Shunya-Sampadane otherwise known as Linganga Samarasya.

to a greater extent. Whatever it may be their contention seems to be that on no account St. Paul's experience should be compared to or equated with Shunya *Void* which is obviously impersonal and Neti, Neti, as you have put it. If this is so, I think I should make myself clear on this point.

When I used the expression "some what akin to" on page 35, I really meant that such kind of experience should rather go to the field of mysticism than theology. This general statement or vague comparison does in no way indicate any sort of classification or equation either personal or impersonal experience.

Some of the oriental scholars who have gone through the Indian Upanishads, are generally inclined to think that all Hindu Mysticism is entirely impersonal, Neti, Neti. The Upanishadic thought or the Aryan rational mysticism under the influence of reason otherwise called "Infinite Knowledge" has always sought for an "Absolute logically mathematical Entity and landed on the border land of Neti Neti which has forced to equate the individual soul with the universal soul. But in Lingayat Mysticism especially of the Vachana Literature of the 12th century which is quite different from, will be made clear in the following paragraphs.

(1) Although Lingayatism is one of the Dravidian Bhakti Schools from start to finish, the usage of the word 'Shunya' seems to have brought in this kind of confusion. In the technology of Anubhava Mantapa, the word 'Shunya' does not mean as your theologians conceive Neti Neti of the Aryan Upanishads but some thing else.

It is not the negation of personality or *Egoism* but negation of *Spiritual Egotism.* It is not only "Shunya" but also "Sampadane", or possession of something. It is an attempt to gain something by losing something. Therefore, it is not "Shunya" but "Sampadane". It is not the minus (–) of the Upanishads, but minus as well as Plus (+) of the Anubhava Mantapa. The Upanishadic mysticism which begins with feeling and ends in reason otherwise known as "Gnanamarga" is meant only for the select few. But Anubhava Mantapa Mysticism though starts with the same kind of intuition, ends not in abstract idealism but in concrete action. Consequently it is meant for one and all, including even the most illiterate family man.

The universal gospel of Upanishads praised by Romain Rolland, preached by Vivekanada, practised by Rama-Krishna Parama-Hamsa, supported by Prof. Duessen, philosophised by Aurobindo, and propounded and propagated by Radha-Krishanan, the modern stalwart of Hinduism, is ever preached and never practised on a wide scale in India. The Vachanakaras always have criticised Upanishadic thought as "Vagadvaita." Knowledge in theory not in practice. Thus I have appreciated Anubhava Mantapa Mysticism, in paralytic India, not for equation but for its action. Therefore, "Shunya Sampadane" is fundamentally not against personality or self-consciousness, but against consciousness, of pride in the spiritual growth which is foreign to, and therefore an impediment on the way to the Pilgrims's Progress of the Soul.

In his "Varieties of Religious Experiences" says William James "In St. Paul's language - I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" - only when 'I' become as nothing can God enter in and no difference between his life and mine remain outstanding" (page 409). In the language of Anubhava Mantapa "Nanenne-Neenenne". I do not say 'I' or 'You' i.e. I do not know where the Subject begins and Object ends. Strictly speaking this is not the denial of individuality, but a candid confession of inability to express the real state of experience which is technically known as ineffability. Therefore when I referred to St. Paul, I have guardedly used the expression "Some what akin to".

That anubhava mantapa mysticism hates not egoism but self-consciousness of spiritual pride, may be verified by referring to the following pages of treatise, page 10, 24, the whole para No. 6, 27, 28, etc.

(II) In Shatshala philosophy of Lingayatism the last stage is called "Aikyasthala" or "Linganga Samarasya". 'Linga' is God and 'Anga' is 'Jeeva' or individual soul. Both of them go hand in hand in all the stages of spiritual life, however perfect his intellectual attainment or experience may be. In consequence, a Lingayat is never allowed not even for a moment in his life to discard his "Ishta Linga" from his breast. It always being objective to him is worshipped till he breathes his last. Even a "Jangama" otherwise called "Nirabhari Virashaiva" has to worship his Istha - Linga till his death, and it is ever buried with him in the grave. The analogy used to illustrate this last stage is "Sharana Sati" and "Linga Pati" (pure love relation between husband and wife) is a proof

of individuality being kept through out. Therefore we should make a difference between the Lingayat Mysticism which never tries to equate and the Upanishadic Mysticism which dares equation with God and declares "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am Brahman). The language of the intoxicated intellect haunted by mathematically logical unity can hardly be met with the mysticism of Anubhava Mantapa.

SYNOPSIS
for the
Advanced Studies in Lingayatism

A FAITH, PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION

By Rev. **C. D. Uttangi**

Introduction

The place of Lingayatism in the religious history of India.

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2. Its Development :
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Lingayatism, A Religion

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Rev. C. D. Uttangi (1881-1962) a reputed scholar and one of the silent builders of Karnataka, is one of those choice spirits who have lighted their own torch of learning. He is the author of various studies in Eastern and Western Philosophy, comparative religion and Kannada literature. His books on "The Historicity of Anubhava Mantapa" and "Siddharama Sahitya Sangraha" are land marks in Kannada interpretative research. Above all, Rev. C.D. Uttangi has by his monumental works, came to be inseparably linked with Sarvajna. He was President of the Kannada Literary Conference held at Gulbarga in 1949.